



COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO

GENERAL SERVICES AGENCY

Title: *Local Food Purchase Policy*

Effective Date: July 24, 2012

Drafted by: Caryn Maddalena, Purchasing Supervisor

Prepared by: Caryn Maddalena, Purchasing Supervisor
Kathleen Karle, Division Manager, Public Health Department

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1. PURPOSE

The “Local Food Purchase Policy” of the County of San Luis Obispo is intended to promote economic vitality and support local agricultural interests, and to promote optimal public health and safety of its citizens by making fresh and nutritious produce readily available, and to protect our natural resources so that future generations will have an opportunity to thrive.

2. DEFINITIONS

2.0a. “Producer” refers to the local farmer who grows the produce and may market and distribute directly to the County.

b. “Broker” refers to local enterprises which purchase produce from the local farmer and sell it to the County.

2.1 “Local Produce” refers to fruits and vegetables.

2.2 “Local” is defined by the following tiers. The first preference would be to purchase Tier 1 produce. If that is not available, then Tier 2 produce would be acceptable. If Tier 2 produce is not available, then Tier 3 produce would be acceptable. If no local produce is available in any of the tiers, then purchasing produce outside the tiers would be allowed.

- Tier 1 –produce grown by the local farmer and processed within San Luis Obispo County
- Tier 2 –produce grown by the local farmer and processed within 5 neighboring counties – Monterey, Kern, Kings, Ventura, and Santa Barbara
- Tier 3 – produce grown and processed within the State of California

2.3 “Reasonable” means that the Purchasing Department will work with the Producer and/or Broker to ensure that local produce is purchased, at prices that are fair to all parties concerned, before purchasing elsewhere.

3. SCOPE

3.1 Buying Local Supports Our Local Economy:

Supporting local Producers benefits our County by keeping local dollars spent by farm and business owners recycling back into our local economy, thereby multiplying consumer demands locally. In the case of direct sales, the Producer receives a greater share of the consumer dollar as externalities related to storage and distribution may be reduced or eliminated. Supporting local Producers will help sustain the viability of Central Coast agriculture, and help to preserve this important economic and cultural resource so that we can continue to rely on a dependable local food supply.

3.2 Buying Local Increases Food Security:

The Central Coast is fortunate to have a year-round growing season and many different microclimates where a wide variety of food can be produced. The county’s suitable soil, amenable climate and commitment by farmers to excellence in land stewardship ensure quality produce that is nationally recognized; however, our arable land is rapidly being lost to development. Seven thousand (7,000) acres of farmland were converted to urban sprawl in just two years, from 2000 to 2002¹. Preserving our agricultural landscape and our ability to feed ourselves will come as a result of increased support of our local food Producers.

3.3 Purchase of Local Produce decreases travel distances, shortens supply chains, and has the potential to confer multiple benefits including:

3.3.1- Flavorful Food: In the global food system, fruits and vegetables travel an average of 1,500² miles from farm to fork and certain foods, such as apples, may remain in controlled atmosphere storage facilities for up to a year³ before they reach a grocery store. In our local food system where transportation and storage may be minimized, Producers can allow their fruits and vegetables to ripen naturally while providing us with a variety of fruits and vegetables. Access to flavorful produce choices helps fight the obesity epidemic by providing healthy and tasty alternatives to processed foods.

3.3.2- Fresh Food: Global-scale produce has been bred and selected for transportability, shelf-life and the ability to ripen artificially. Buying local produce decreases travel distances, can reduce handling and storage requirements, and could allow for a more natural ripening process and consumption closer to the harvest date.

3.3.3- Decreased Travel Distances: Decreased travel distances can enhance conservation efforts by reducing the need to ship and store, which translates into energy savings. In San Luis Obispo County, we can grow many crops year-round. We

¹ Pasciuto, Kimberly. 2010. “Central Coast Foodshed Guide, Information and Resources for the Development of a Foodshed Identity for the SLO County Region”

² Hendrickson, John. 1996. “Energy use in the U.S. food system: A summary of existing research and analysis.”

³ North Carolina Ag Extension Service. “Post-Harvest Cooling and Handling of Apples” <http://www.bae.ncsu.edu>

can choose to consume produce that is grown locally and in abundance. In some cases, we can reduce our dependence on fossil fuels by choosing locally grown minimally processed and packaged produce. Promoting the purchase of local food is also an adaptation strategy listed in *“Integrated Climate Change Adaptation Planning in San Luis Obispo County”*.

4. PROCEDURE

- 4.1 The County Request for Proposal (RFP) will state a preference and standards for the purchase of Tier 1 produce, to be used at the jail and juvenile services center.
- 4.2 The Purchasing Department may consult and collaborate with other appropriate county departments and/or industry experts to prepare a list of local Producers and Brokers who meet the definitions above. Reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate Producers to provide food for the jail and juvenile services center.
- 4.3 The Purchasing Department may utilize cooperative buying opportunities as available.
- 4.4 The General Services Agency Director is authorized to update the policy every other year.

5. OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

The Healthy Eating Active Living Coalition (HEAL-SLO) actively supports the adoption of this policy. The General Services Agency (GSA) was consulted and supports the adoption of this policy. The Sheriff’s office was consulted and supports the adoption of this policy. The Central Coast Agricultural Network (CCAN) was consulted and supports the adoption of this policy. The San Luis Obispo County Farm Bureau was consulted and supports the adoption of this policy. The County Department of Agriculture/Weights and Measures was consulted and provided input into this policy.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

[Tips for Institutional Buyers](#)

6. EXCEPTIONS

None

7. REVISION HISTORY

| Version | Date | Chapter/Section | Details |
|---------|---------------|-----------------|------------|
| 1.0 | July 24, 2012 | All | New Policy |
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